CONDEMN THE APARTHIED

EDUCATION POLICY OF SRI LANKA

DISCRIMINATION.....

THE TAMILS STUDENTS IN CEYLON ARE BEING SUPPRESSED BY THE OPPRESSIVE SRI LANKA GOVERNMENT'S APARTHIED EDUCATION POLICY.

The attached "OPINION" of the University Teachers of Ceylon and the Memorandom issued by the Members of the Jaffna Campus will explain the situation and the plight of the Tamil students in Ceylon.

A seminar held at the London School of Economics on the 19th March to condemn the APARTHIED EDUCATION POLICY OF SRI LANKA passed the following resolutions.

- 1) We, the Tamil students studying in UK., condemn the aparthied education policy of Sri Lanka government and extend our support to those who fight against the "stadardisation" an expression of discrimination and oppression in Ceylon.
- 2) To show our protest against aparthied education policy of Sri Lanka, we resolve to stage a one day 'Sit in' in front of the Sri Lanka High Commission on the 11th April.

US ON 11th APRIL, WEDNESDAY. 9am To 5.30pm.

SHOW DOWN ... ONE DAY SIT IN IN FRONT OF THE HIGH COMMISSION.

Organised by GUTS-Group to Unite Tamil Students abroad- (CEYLON)

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FACTS ABOUT THE JAFFNA CAMPUS SCIENCE EXAM

A Statement from the SCIENCE STUDENTS' UNION, UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA, JAFFNA CAMPUS

The Science Student's Union of the Jaffna Campus met on 17th and 20th November 1978 at an extraordinary general meeting to discuss the statement made by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka at a press conference on 10th November regarding the examination results of the Science Faculty of the Jaffna Campus, and decided unanimously to issue the following statement refuting the Vice-Chancellor's claims:

We the Science Students of the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka are deeply distressed by the publication of a statement attributed to our Vice-Chancellor concerning the examinations of the Jaffna Campus. This comes in the wake of similar statement made by others in recent weeks and widely in the press. One gets the impression that these are part of a calculated move aimed at damaging the reputation of our young institution.

The Ceylon Daily News of Monday November 13th 1978 carried a news item on its front page entitled: 'Discrepancies in G.S.Q. Tamil scripts marking'. The news referred to a press conference held on the 10th of November at which the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka, Prof. P.P.G.L. Siriwardene made some statements about certain discrepancies in the marking of Tamil scripts in the University. The newspaper reported that:

'In the Jaffna Campus, the results of the General Science Qualifying Examination revealed there were only first and second class passes and not a single

third class.

This high percentage 'A' passes and the first and second class passes in the Tamil medium indicate discrepancies and this matter will be inquired into, said Prof. P.P.G.L. Siriwardene, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka at the press conference on Friday'.

As the Vice-Chancellor did not make any corrections to this statement subsequently, we are compelled to believe that our Vice-Chancelleor had in fact made such a statement. As the statement is in many respects erroneous and misleading and lends itself to use by persons with malicious intentions, we have surprised and shocked that the head of a University - a man of learning to whom the whole nation looks up, should have made a statement that is injurious to a section of his institution and casts aspersions on the behaviour of an important and responsible section of his employees. And this was done when he had and free access to facts.

(1) In the first place, our Vice-Chancellor should have known that there is no such examination called the General Science Qualifying Examination neld by the Jaffna Campus.

(2) If indeed he referred to the First Examination is Science by this name, he should have known that the Jaffna Campus does not award classes on the ormance at the First Examination, be it in Science or Arts. We are not aware of other Campuses in the Island awarding such classes in the first year performance examination.

(3) The only Science examination for which the Jaffna Campus has so far awarded classes is the General Degree in Science Examination held in 1977.

Rut then this examination was not held in Tamil medium, whereas the Vice-Chancellor has referred to 'First and Second Class passes in the Tamil medium'. If indeed he had referred to the English medium Examination for which all Tamil candidates appeared, one need not elaborate on the possibilities of exploitation by mischief makers to which this vital error of the Vice-Chancellor lends itself. Now will the public know that the scripts are there for any non-Tamil examiner to see or that Sinhala examiners were also involved in the assessment of the Tamil candidates?

(U) If the Vice-Chancellor was referring, then, to the General Degree Examination in Science held in the English medium (and in the Sinhala medium), the

should have known that there is no category called "third class" (in fact, we are not aware of any other Campus of the Island having such category. He should have known that there is no category called "third class" (a fact, we are not aware of any other Campus of the Island having such category. He should have known that there was right when he said that there was not "a single third class". But if he were referring to ordinary passes, he should have known that there were ten Tamil candidates who obtained ordinary passes. Again, we need not elaborate on the use that mischief makers could make of this erroneous statement coming from the most authoritative person on the subject.

(5) Having said all this, he leaves another important matter unsaid. In fact, in our opinion, having left this matter unsaid misleads the reader more than what he said. We refer to the category of failures at this examination. The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the 'high percentage of first and second class passes'. We wish he had also drawn attention to the high percentage of failures among the Tamil candidates. 35.6 per cent of the Tamil candidates failed this examination.

Is it small wonder, therefore, that we are shocked at these statements of the Vice-Chancellor. We are young and inexperienced students of the University looking for guidance and example from those who had the good fortune to climb up to the lofty heights of the academic world. We are puzzled as to why the Vice-Chancellor should have made these statements at a specially arranged press conference. (We are unable to understand how the Vice-Chancellor, who is under the Ministry of Higher Education, was associated with the Minister of Industries & Scientific Affairs, Mr. Cyril Mathew, who arranged the press conference. Was this an instance of Academic people becoming the spokesman of politicians!). Did the Vice-Chancellor not have the facts before him? If so, why did he make such damaging statemts without ascertaining the facts, which were there in his own offices for him to call for and peruse? It is seven months since the results were released and he had ample time to investigate into it if he had any suspicions of foul play. In fact he had visited our Campus at least twice during this present? period. What prompted him to raise this matter at this moment ?

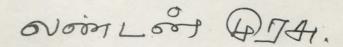
Since the Vice-Chancellor or the President of the Jaffna Campus, on whom rests the onus of presenting the facts to the public, have failed to do this for reasons best known to them, we who are at the receiving end of ridicule, humiliation and discrimination as a consequence of the distorted picture presented by the Vice-Chancellor and others regarding the degree awarded by the Jaffna Campus, have been driven to this position of placing the facts to whom it may concern, so that they could view these objectively and come to the right conclusions.

In the first place, we wish to state that so far there has been only one examination held by the Jaffna Campus for the Degree of Bachelor of Science. This was held in 1977. The examination was held in the English and Sinhala media but not in the Tamil medium. Examiners for this were both Sinhalese and Tamils. The scripts were first marked internally and then sent for a second marking to examiners from the other campuses of the University. These examiners were also both Sinhalese and Tamils.

The following are the statistics relating to the examinations under investigation:

Results of the General Degree Examination in Science (Mathematics/Statistics/Ecomomics) held in December 1977

| | Iamil | Sinnaiese |
|---|----------|-----------|
| I. Number of students enrolled for the course | 73 | 30 |
| 2. Number of students who sat the Final Examination | 62 | 30 |
| Number of students who sat the Final examination Number of students who failed the first or second annual exam and were not allowed to proceed to the Final | . 11 | NIL |
| 4. Number of failures at the 3rd Exam: Maths/Stats. | 15 | 04 |
| 4. Number of Tailures at the 3rd Exam. Healing visits. | NIL | 01 |
| 5. Number of ordinary passes: Maths/Stats. | 06 04 | 05 01 |
| 6. Number of second class (Lower): Maths/Stats. | 16 | IO NIL |
| 7. Number of second class (Upper): Maths/Stats. | 10 | 06 |



Economi cs 01 06 8. Number of First Class: Maths/Stats. 09 NIL NIL Results as percentage of the number of students who sat the Final Examination according to Communities Tami 1 Sinhalese Failures 24.2 16.7 Ordinary passes Second Class (Lower 20.0 27.4 33. 3 Second Class (Upper) First Class 14.5 10.0 Results as percentage of the number of students enrolled for the Course in each medium Sinhalese Tamil Failures 35.6 16.7 Ordinary passes Second Class (Lower) Second Class (Upper) 23. 3 33.3

The tables reveal that the percentage of Ordinary passes and Classes is lower for Tamil candidates than for Sinhalese candidates except for First Classes where the percentage is slightly higher for Tamil candidates. It may also be placed on record here that if the Tamil students who entered in 1974 and who should have passed out in 1977 only 64.4 per cent managed to pass the Degree Examination, whereas 83.3 per cent of the Sinhala students who entered in 1974 passed out in 1977.

Although it is alleged that too many First and Second Classes have been awarded, it should be noted that the class levels set for the candidates of our Campuses was remarkably higher than those in any of the other Campuses of this Island. Unlike in other Campuses, in our campus the students selected for the Special Courses have to sit for General Degree Examination first among the Tamil students out of the 9 First Classes, 5 out of 11 Second Classes (Upper) and 2 out of the 17 Second Classes (Lower) were obtained by students following the Special Courses who, when they pass out with Special Degree Certificates, will not be given the General Degree qualification that they have obtained now. So far none of these Sinhalese students are following the Special Courses. Taking therefore only the General Degree into account only 4 have passed with First Classes, out of which three Sinhalese students and only one is a Tamil.

The examination was only in Mathematics and Statistics except in the case of eight students who also offered Economics. Subjects like Chem styr, Physics, Botany or Zoology were not involved in this examination. This fact is important in viewing the results, as a possibility of scoring very high, even maximum marks, is there in the case of these subjects. It should not be forgotten that this particular batch of Tamil students entered with very good results when the University admissions were subjected to mediawise standardisation.

Having placed these facts here, we would like to deal with the implications of the erroneous statements made by the Vice-Chancellor for us, for the staff of the Jaffna Campus and for the institution as a whole.

(I) In the first place, the statements made by the Vice-Chancellor and others lead one to conclude that those who received Degrees from the Jaffna Campus do not really deserve them and that these degrees cannot be taken on their face value. For any ordinary man who happened to read or hear about these utterances, this will apply not only to one particular batch of graduates but, by extension, to all graduates of the Campus. This will mean that those of us who earn a degree from this Campus after several years of hard work will have to face humiliation and discrimination when we compete withother graduates for jobs. We will be made to suffer for no fault of ours but as a result of statements made by responsible men who did not care to check their facts or to tell the whole truth to the public. One need not go into the many disabilities that we will have to face and the mental agony that we will be suffering from when both serious-minded employers and mischief-makers use these statements. This will not be confined to the shores of this Island but will also spread to other countries whose recognition of our degrees will be affected by this.

(2) Perhaps the most serious implication is that resulting from the aspersions cast on the staff of the Science Faculty, which again by extension will apply to the staff of the whole institution (this is no baseless fear, for it seems to have already happened, as for instance, when in a certain Campus some members objected to scripts of the Arts Faculty being sent for second marking to the Jaffna Campus on the grounds that the marking at the latter place is very lenient; and they referred to the Science results to prove this). The integrity of the staff of the Jaffna Campus is being questioned. The integrity of even those staff members of other Campuses who were second examiners for the Jaffna Campus examination is involved here. This is a very serious matter for any academic community who are engaged in a search for truth. We wonder whether the Vice-Chancellor realised the implications of his statement for his own community.

(3) The Jaffna Campus is a young institution and like all young institutions it is struggling to establish itself and earn a name. The staff of the Campus are admirably engaged in the task of achieving this and anyone who cares to visit the place will see for oneself the difficult conditions under which they are doing this. Having seen this, the Secretary to the Ministry of Migher Education has on many a public platform, even when addressing predominantly Sinhalese audiences (as at the Navarangahala in September 1978 when parents of the fresh Arts students were assembled to listen to him) stated that admirable work is being done in this Campus. At a time when the hard work of the ploneers here is beginning to show results, the degrees awarded by this institution are being made to be viewed with suspicion. And this is being done by no other than the one who is the highest authority for the institution — the Vice-Chancellor. It is indeed a shame that the good work of this institution is being rewarded in this manner. Will not the institution become the subject of ridicule? When it is struggling to raise its head, why should it be struck down in this manner? Will not mischief makers use this to ruin the institution? We are aware that the attempts made in this Campus to raise the quality of higher education and the standard of the degrees, especially by emphasising the role of English, have upset many. The fact that the Campus is now attracting more and more qualified personnel is a pointer to the development of this inastitution. There is no doubt that the graduates from this place will be able to compete with others with equal qualifications. It will not be surprising if there are people in this Island who do not like such developments. The Vice-Chancellor has played into their hands and provided them with ammunition to damage the Jaffna Campus.

(4) That the allegations discussed above, couled as they are with similar allegations against Tamil examiners in the other Campuses, have implications for

(4) That the allegations discussed above, coupled as they are with similar allegations against Tamil examiners in the other Campuses, have implications for the Tamil community as a whole goes without saying. We are fully aware that with the partial removal of the standardisation scheme for admission to the University, many feel the need to introduce a scheme that will ensure the admissions of a majority of Sinhala students to the prestigious faculties of Medicine, sity, many feel the need to introduce a scheme that will ensure the admissions of a majority of Sinhala students to the prestigious faculties of Medicine, sity, many feel the need to introduce a scheme that will ensure the admissions of a majority of Sinhala students to the prestigious faculties of Medicine, sity, many feel the need to introduce a scheme that will ensure the scheme that will ensure the scheme that will be scheme that will be supposed to the scheme that the scheme that will be supposed to the scheme that the scheme that will be supposed to the scheme that the scheme that will be sup

It is for these reasons that we would like the Vice-Chancellor to check the facts again and to issue a corrected statement in his own interests and in the interests of the Jaffna Campus and also he owes a public apology to the Staff and students of the Jaffna Campus.

We are issuing this statement to help clear any misunderstanding that might have been caused in the minds of the public as a consequence of the Vice-Chancellor's statement.

President

First Class

Shan Gawman

Secretary

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